

**CONTENTS OF A BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT (BA) SUBMITTED
TO FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE (FWS)**

1. Description of preferred alternative. If no preferred alternative, each alternative must have a separate biological assessment. The description should include (but is not limited to) the type and scope of action proposed, a chronology of when associated activities will occur, and past consultations with FWS. We encourage you to include a copy of the environmental document for further clarification.
2. Alternatives. Section 7 regulations recommend that the biological assessment include a discussion and analysis of alternative actions that were considered for the project. The FWS requests that if the agency is not providing an environmental document, (as requested above) that the biological assessment itself include the alternatives analysis.
3. Description of project area. The description of the location of the analysis area should include either a legal description or map. The BA should also detail the environmental baseline, such as past and present activities that have occurred in the analysis area or adjacent to the area, depending on the species and the proposed action. The biological assessment should describe in detail the current environment. A discussion of specific impacts to the analysis area would be appropriate here as well. If you are unsure of how large an area to consider in your environmental description, consideration of an entire drainage may be necessary.
4. List of Species. Use FWS species list and the CDC information. If you have asked for our concurrence on a list, indicate that in the BA. Always reference the 1-4-__-SP-__ number (called a species list number).
5. Description of the species and habitat. This should include descriptions of how the species may be utilizing the habitat - i.e. wintering bald eagles foraging and roosting along bodies of water. You may want to include a description of the general and local status of the species.
6. On-site Inspection. The biological assessment should include descriptions of inventories or surveys (or on-site inspections) conducted prior to preparation of the BA. These descriptions should include when the survey was done, how it was done, and what species were considered. If surveys are included in the mitigation measures, they should be indicated in the Record of Decision.

7. Analysis of effects. The analysis should include a review of the direct, indirect and cumulative effects of the action on the species and habitat. Indirect effects should include all future activities expected as a result of the project. i.e. - roads associated with timber sale proposals and increased human access.
8. Mitigation measures that avoid adverse impacts. These measures will be repeated in the concurrence letter from FWS and are mandated. Furthermore, the mitigation measures should be repeated in the Record of Decision. The FWS will request a copy of the Record of Decision for our files. (FWS reminds the federal agency that the Record of Decision must not be signed or final until Section 7 compliance is complete.)
9. Conclusion. The conclusion should make a final determination of effect, such as no effect, not likely to effect, likely to adversely or beneficially effect, or jeopardize the continued existence and recovery of a species. The BA should also include an explanation of how the determination was made.
10. References. References can include any EA/EIS documentation (in draft form), specific references to Land Management Plans, other current literature and personal correspondence (include name and current location).
11. Record of Decision. The FWS will ask for a copy of the Record of Decision for the files. The purpose is to assure that the decision maker is fully aware of the measures indicated in the BA that avoid impacts to endangered species and that these measures will be implemented as part-of-the-action. Once again, we remind the federal agency or representative that no Record of Decision is signed or final prior to completion of Section 7.